1: Jenness--42-43 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 164

"The natives were remarkably healthy: measles, influenza, tuberculosis, and venereal diseases, all common amongst Eskimos elsewhere, were unknown here. Occasionally they were assailed with diarrhoea or with indigestion, and colds were frequent at the beginning of winter, but the only malady that ever proved fatal was an insidious stomach trouble that may have [43] been a form of ptomaine poisoning. Parry mentions this disease at Iglulik in Baffin island. (1) He says; 'The complaints of those that died at their huts, therefore, did not come under observation. It appears, however, to have been acute inflammation of some of the abdominal viscera, very rapid in its career. In the generality, the disease assumed a more insidious and sub-acute form, under which the patient lingered for awhile, and was then either carried off by a diarrhoea, or slowly recovered by the powers of nature.' In one case that I observed the man was attacked very suddenly and died within a few days, while in another the patient lingered for many months. In the first case the victim fell ill early in the winter, when the natives were still eating caribou meat and fat that had been secured during the previous summer and fall; in the latter the man had been quite well during part of the summer at least, but was ill when I saw him in December and hardly able to walk.

"1. Parry, Vol. 4, p. 75."

The exact origin and nature of the disease, however, is uncertain, nor had we any means of ascertaining its frequency. With the influx of traders and missionaries into the country the conditions of life are fast changing. Famine looms less in the foreground, but in its place European diseases are threatening the health of the communities and bid fair to rival all other causes in their effect on the death-rate."

"...for in throwing open their country to outside invasion we have incurred a heavy responsibility towards the natives. We may increase the security of life among them by checking infanticide and murder, we may protect them from unscrupulous exploitation and from the ravages of intoxicating liquors, but all this will be of little avail unless we immediately take measures to secure them against the introduction of our diseases. Smallpox carried off 2,000 of the Greenland Eskimos in 1734 and 1735, and in the same century it destroyed many of the Labrador natives as well. Thirty years ago it was estimated that the Eskimo population of the Mackenzie river delta numbered 2,000; by 1913 it was reduced to barely 500, the majority of the natives having been swept away by measles. The epidemic of influenza in 1918 exacted a terrible toll among the Eskimos of northern Alaska, several settlements being practically wiped out. The Copper Eskimos have no diseases of their own, or at least none were known up to 1916; but white men and western Eskimos are flocking into their country, and in a few more years perhaps they too will fall victims to some of the scourges of our civilization. It may be impossible to prevent this calamity entirely, but at least we could do something to check it, by instituting a kind of quarantine such as the Danes have done for Greenland. At the present time the only practicable route into the Copper Eskimo country is by way of the Mackenzie river, and if no one were allowed to go eastward without a

certificate from a medical officer it might be possible to save these natives from the worst of our diseases and a more or less speedy extinction."

2: Stefansson--234 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
164, 117

"Skin Diseases. Several persons have sores now, mostly on the hands, though some on eyebrows, forehead, and one in the scalp. He has hand sores too. Where this man's hand sores have healed there are little elevations, almost like warts and lighter color than rest of back of hand, about color of palm. The one now open is circular, like a conical pit, about one cm. wide and half a cm. deep. It is red, perhaps from plucking off scab, which seems a habit. It is not apparently a 'running' sore, nor yet is it dry, about as moist as our lips."

2: Stefansson--249 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
164, 117

"Skin Diseases. Amirailak has some sores on one leg (did not see them) and he showed me scars of sores from sole to knee open last winter. Size ten cents to dollar and leg as a whole swollen, slightly swollen now. Sores chiefly or only on feet. He is the father of the baby died at birth a few days ago." (10)

"10. [Stefansson's comment, p. 453] I have learned from Natkusiaq who went for us in 1915 to get the North Star from Anderson in Dolphin and Union Straits, that the Amigailaq mentioned here is now a house-confined cripple as a result of his leg sores."

13: Jenness--89 (1914-1916) 1917 Copper Eskimo
116, 164

"The death-rate is high and the mortality among children especially heavy."

13: Jenness--91
116, 164, 744

(1914-1916) 1917

Copper Eskimo

"At present these people are very healthy and without any serious ailments. The population appears to be about stationary, owing to a low birth-rate and a high death-rate, the result of the hardships of life in the Arctic. But if ever the diseases which have swept through the western Eskimos find their way into this country, more especially measles, tuberculosis, and venereal diseases, half the population would probably be swept away within a decade or two. The two latter diseases, if once introduced, would be ineradicable; they would be handed down from one generation to the next, as in the Mackenzie Delta at the present day. Possibly their introduction is inevitable, but since Herschel Island is the chief portal leading into the country at the present time, there would seem to be some prospect of successfully keeping them out if no one, white or native, were allowed to sail from that port eastward to Coronation Gulf without a medical certificate from the medical officer resident in the Delta; anyone found in the country of the Copper Eskimos without such a certificate could be made liable to immediate deportation."

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

• 164 755 A little sickness was inevitable in the circumstances of their lives, and the medicine-men conjured in vain over one man who was slowly dying of a malady I myself could not diagnose. Several natives had coughs and colds, the result of changing from the outdoor life of summer to the seclusion of the winter hut. Ikpuck himself suffered from rheumatism, and borrowed my belt for a season that the vitality in my body might be transmitted to his own. Another invalid, the medicine-men said, was cured by Jumbo, my dog, who retrieved and restored his wandering soul. In gratitude they tied a band of soft white fur around the dog's neck to keep out the cold. Yet none of their ailments appeared serious except that of the dying man; and his had lasted too long to cloud the cheerfulness that pervaded the little community.

123 I revealed to the villagers my intention of travelling eastward, to visit some of their countrymen. They tried hard to dissuade me, asserting that the natives around the Coppermine River were so unfriendly toward white men that it would hardly be safe to venture among them. Of course, what concerned them was not my personal safety so much as the loss of trade through my absence, and the competition from the large body of eastern natives who would immediately flock to Bernard Harbour. They altered their tactics when they found that dissuasion was useless, and even heaped on me a number of petty commissions. One

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

the past, and a new mechanical age has brought magazine rifles, shotguns, steel traps, and even gasolene engines. The caribou are passing with the bows and arrows; of all the herds that once crossed the narrow strait to Victoria Island hardly one now reaches the Arctic shore. Strange diseases are making their appearance, disease that the old-time Eskimo never heard of and for which he has no name. The stern laws of civilization have descended on the land; no longer is infanticide tolerated, or the blood-feud allowed to run its course. "Furs, furs, more furs," is the white man's cry. "Without furs there is no salvation, no ammunition to shoot the scattered game and satisfy your hungry children." The tribal bands where each man toiled for all and shared his food in common are resolving into their constituent families, and every family vies with the rest in the race for wealth and worldly prosperity.

Whither will it all lead? Fifty years ago the cyclone swept over the Eskimos of the Mackenzie River delta, and of its two thousand inhabitants a scant two hundred survive. Fifty years earlier it struck Baffin Island with a similar result. Will history, fifty years hence, record the same fate for this twilight land where for two years we carried on our mission? Were we the harbingers of a brighter dawn, or only messengers of ill-omen, portending disaster?

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

EPILOGUE

123 FOUR years after Girling brought me the message from Icehouse a radio station at the mouth of the Coppermine River sent me this call from Ikpuck: "Come back and hunt with me once more on Victoria Island." Jennie added her appeal:

"If you come I will make you a new suit of clothes. But come quickly, for I may not live long."

No call came from Icehouse. She had succumbed a few months earlier to the influenza that had been carried into Coronation Gulf from the white man's world. And Ikpuck never sent a second call.

When summer came round the old hunter wandered back with two or three companions to our stamping grounds on Victoria Island. One morning he went out alone to look for caribou and did not return. No one knows what happened; but of one thing I am sure, that when the angel drew near and offered him the darker draught he drained it without shrinking. Jennie lost her first baby about the same time; and she herself followed it within six months, victim of the tuberculosis that was to carry off her husband also. In America, as elsewhere, the kiss of the white man has brought death to numberless natives whom isolation had protected from our diseases; and the People of the Twilight did not escape.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

EPILOGUE

Within ten years of our departure from Bernard Harbour one third of them had been swept away by influenza, and of the hundred Eskimos gathered around the radio station at Coppermine no fewer than twenty-six suffered from advanced tuberculosis.

Was this inevitable? Had we been more conscious of our responsibilities could we have spared them so rude an awakening, so painful an entry into what we call a civilized world? Or does fate spin her web remorselessly, blind to human hopes and weaknesses, indifferent to human suffering?

The children of Jennie's generation who escaped the new diseases underwent a social and economic revolution. Even as we sailed away traders entered their country seeking fox-furs, always fox-furs; and for those pelts so useless for real clothing they offered rifles, shot-guns, steel tools and other goods that promised to make life much easier. So the Eskimos abandoned their communal seal hunts and scattered in isolated families along the coasts in order to trap white foxes during the winter months when the fur of that animal reaches its prime. Their dispersal loosened the old communal ties that had held the families together. The men no longer labored for the entire group, but hunted and trapped each one for his family alone. Their diet and costume changed: more and more it became the diet and costume of the white man. For they had to purchase their winter's supply of food from the trading stores, since trapping